

Amendments to Claims

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-61 Canceled.

Claim 62 (Currently Amended). A process for treating artefacts consisting essentially of the following steps in sequence:

providing an envelope formed from a transfer support consisting essentially of a single layer of material coated with a pattern, wherein said envelope ~~which~~ is adapted to receive the artefact;

sucking air from an open end of said envelope to cause said transfer support to adhere to both sides of said artefact;

transferring ~~a~~ said pattern from said transfer support to both sides of said artefact by heating said artefact and said transfer support and applying pressure to said pattern in contact with said artefact;

wherein said step of providing said envelope comprises forming said envelope from said transfer support so that said open end is defined by edge portions of said transfer support;

wherein during said sucking step, said envelope is so arranged as to retain flexibility along its periphery, thereby allowing said pressure to be applied to said pattern directly by said transfer support;

and wherein said envelope comprises an inner side contacting said object and an outer side contacting an external environment surrounding said envelope.

Claim 63 (Previously Presented). The process according to claim 62, wherein said transfer support comprises a first sheet placed above said artefact and a second sheet placed under said artefact.

Claim 64 (Previously Presented). The process according to claim 62, further comprising the step of removing said transfer support from said artefact after handling and installing the artefact.

Claim 65 (Previously Presented). The process according to claim 62, wherein, after said sucking step, the process further comprises the step of submitting said artefact and said transfer support to a first intermediate heating action at a temperature at which said transfer support is thermoformed.

Claim 66 (Previously Presented). The process according to claim 62, wherein said heating step occurs at temperatures comprised between 200°C and 230°C.

Claim 67 (Previously Presented). The process according to claim 62, wherein said heating step lasts for a time between 30 seconds and 30 minutes.

Claim 68 (Previously Presented). The process according to claim 62, wherein said transfer support is made from a gas-tight thermoformable plastics material.

Claim 69 (Previously Presented). The process according to claim 68, wherein said gas-tight thermoformable plastics material is constituted by polyvinyl alcohol.

Claim 70 (Currently Amended). An apparatus for treating artefacts consisting essentially of:

enclosing means for enclosing an artefact into an envelope formed from a transfer support consisting essentially of a single layer of material coated with a pattern;

sucking means for sucking air from an open end of said envelope to cause said transfer support to adhere to said artefact;

heating means for heating said artefact and said transfer support to transfer a said pattern from said transfer support to said artefact;

pressing means for applying pressure to said pattern in contact with said artefact to transfer said pattern onto said artefact;

wherein said enclosing means comprises forming means arranged for forming said envelope from said transfer support so that said open end is defined by edge portions of said transfer support;

wherein said pressing means comprises said transfer support which is provided with a flexible peripheral region arranged so as to allow said pressure to be directly applied by said transfer support to said pattern when air is sucked from said open end;

and wherein said envelope comprises an inner side contacting said object and an outer side contacting an external environment

surrounding said envelope.

Claim 71 (Currently Amended). A process for treating artefacts comprising the following steps in sequence:

providing an envelope formed from a ~~substantially~~ gas-tight thermoformable transfer support which is adapted to receive the artefact;

sucking air from an open end of said envelope to cause said transfer support to adhere to both sides of said artefact;

transferring a pattern from said transfer support to both sides of said artefact by heating said artefact and said transfer support and applying pressure to said pattern in contact with said artefact;

wherein said step of providing said envelope comprises forming said envelope from said transfer support so that said open end is defined by edge portions of said transfer support;

wherein during said sucking step, said envelope is so arranged as to retain flexibility along its periphery, thereby allowing said pressure to be applied to said pattern directly by

said transfer support;

and wherein during said sucking step, said envelope comprises an inner side contacting said object and an outer side contacting an external environment surrounding said envelope.

Claim 72 (Previously Presented). An apparatus for treating artefacts comprising:

enclosing means for enclosing an artefact into an envelope formed from a gas-tight thermoformable transfer support;

sucking means for sucking air from an open end of said envelope to cause said transfer support to adhere to said artefact;

heating means for heating said artefact and said transfer support to transfer a pattern from said transfer support to said artefact;

pressing means for applying pressure to said pattern in contact with said artefact to transfer said pattern onto said artefact;

wherein said enclosing means comprises forming means arranged for forming said envelope from said transfer support so that said open end is defined by edge portions of said transfer support;

wherein said pressing means comprises said transfer support which is provided with a flexible peripheral region arranged so as to allow said pressure to be directly applied by said transfer support to said pattern when air is sucked from said open end;

and wherein said envelope comprises an inner side contacting said object and an outer side contacting an external environment surrounding said envelope.

Claim 73 (Canceled).

Claim 74 (Canceled).